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Ship shape memorial

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by [Gordon Thomson](#)

A STATUE of a famous Clyde-built ship is to be erected on the spot where 10 people died during the Clydebank Blitz.

The sculpture is of HMS Ramillies which was built at the Clydebank yard in 1916 and was the first naval ship a young Prince Philip served on. Sculptor Tom McKendrick today gave the Evening Times a sneak preview of his personal tribute to the Clyde's rich shipbuilding heritage which has been three years in the making.

His model of the battleship is to sit aloft a 26ft high plinth to be sited on the corner of Dumbarton Road and Beardmore Street in Dalmuir. It used to be the entrance to the old William Beardmore naval shipyard where HMS Ramillies was built and launched in 1916. The yard was targeted by German war planes during the Second World War and 10 people died at the entrance in a bombing raid during the Clydebank Blitz.

Prince Philip served on the battleship for four months.

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He was



Sculptor Tom McKendrick at the Highland galvanising works in Cumbernauld with his work created to mark Glasgow's shipbuilding past
Pictures: Andy Buchanan







HMS Ramillies, built by William Beardmore & Co Ltd at the Naval Construction Works, Dalmuir leaves the yard on May 7, 1917

commissioned as a midshipman in January, 1940, and served in the Indian Ocean where he helped protect convoys belong to the Australian Expeditionary Force. It was his first Royal Navy posting.

Other notable crew members included 50s singer David Whitfield, who's best known for his hit record Cara Mia as well as veteran BBC foreign correspondent the late Sir Charles Wheeler.

The sculpture is 6.5ft high and more than 21ft in length. Mr McKendrick is proud of the model and said: "Dalmuir Park Housing Association first approached me in 2006 to create a piece of work and it is a project I've thoroughly enjoyed working on. Careful consideration was given to the final location of the warship and we finally decided on the corner of Dumbarton Road and Beardmore Street. This is poignant as it is the site where 10 people lost their lives during the Clydebank blitz of 1941."

His steel work of art was taken to galvanising firm Highland of Cumbernauld where it was dipped in a bath containing 220 tonnes of molten zinc to keep the sculpture rust free for generations.

Highland offered to provide the corrosion-beat coat for free with director Paul McCafferty commenting: "Tom has been working on this sculpture for almost three years and it is a fabulous piece of public art which will serve as a lasting reminder of Dalmuir's shipbuilding past."

Mr McCafferty added: "We work with a number of sculptors, including Andy Scott, and we were only too happy to help Tom by offering to galvanise this warship."

Mr McKendrick admitted: "I am extremely grateful to Highland for galvanising the HMS Ramillies sculpture.

A great deal of time and effort has gone into creating a work of this scale and detail. The sculpture is designed to last for at least 100 years. It is vital that its galvanised coating is applied with expertise and to the highest standards."

His work was commissioned by Dalmuir Park Housing Association as part of an ongoing five-year community arts project costing £50,000. The Scottish Government, Robertson Trust and Community Scotland have provided £35,000 in funds.

"The project has included the creation of a community garden in Nairn Street where vegetables are grown for a lunch club for pensioners and the introduction of hanging flower baskets. The sculpture is to be the centre piece of a grand unveiling ceremony next year.

Housing association chief executive Pat Gilbride said: "The sculpture will be a striking addition to the local community commemorating the area's proud shipbuilding history.

"It also pays tribute to the many local people who contributed to Britain's war effort and those who sadly lost their lives in the blitz. Dalmuir Park would like to thank everyone who has worked on our project, especially Highland, for galvanising the sculpture."

• HMS Ramillies Association: www.hmsramillies.co.uk